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Bulletin

Title: Local Travel Expenses and Emergency Salary and Travel Advances

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This Bulletin provides information on defining local travel expenses, obtaining emergency travel advances, and emergency salary advances for employees. This Bulletin rescinds ARS Bulletin 98-305.

I - Local Travel Expenses

A. Local Travel Expenses

Employees may be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in performing official duties in and around their duty station. This is commonly referred to as reimbursement for “Local Travel”. Local travel expenses may include such things as the cost of subway, bus, train or taxi or, if employees use their privately-owned vehicle, mileage, tolls, and parking. Local travel expenses could be incurred in a variety of work related situations including, but not limited to, required attendance at meetings, conferences or other official functions, training, periodic work assignments at alternate duty locations in or around the duty station, etc. The authority to reimburse employees for local travel expenses is delegated to each Agency. Approval of individual local travel claims is generally the responsibility of the employee’s fundholder, supervisor or other designated travel approving official.

B. Distinguishing Local Travel from Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel

Local travel is distinguished from Temporary Duty (TDY) authorizations based on the mileage incurred from the employee’s official duty station or residence to the travel destination. The distinction between local travel and TDY should not be based solely on whether the employee will seek overnight accommodations or be in travel status for consecutive days. The following rules apply when making local travel or TDY determinations:

When the official travel occurs within one calendar day, local travel is considered to be travel which occurs within a twenty-five (25) mile radius of the employee’s duty station or residence. **Per diem will not be authorized for local travel.** If the travel is greater than 25 miles from either the employee’s duty station or residence, TDY authorizations will be issued. Per diem will not be authorized if the period of travel is less than 12 hours. If the travel period is less than 12 hours, reimbursement will be limited to transportation and miscellaneous expenses only. If the travel period exceeds 12 hours, employees will be reimbursed the M & IE portion of the applicable per diem rate in addition to transportation and miscellaneous expenses incurred.

When the official travel is for consecutive days, local travel is considered to be travel which occurs within a thirty-five (35) mile radius of the employee’s duty station (not their residence). If travel is greater than 35 miles from the employee’s duty station, TDY authorizations will be issued. The same 12 hour rule applies. If the travel period exceeds 12 hours on a given travel day, employees will be authorized the applicable per diem rate in addition to reimbursement for transportation and miscellaneous expenses incurred. If the travel period exceeds 12 hours, but the employee does not obtain overnight accommodations, reimbursement will be limited to the M & IE portion of the applicable per diem rate, transportation, and miscellaneous expenses incurred.

C. Determining Reimbursement for Local Travel Expenses.

The following guidance is offered to assist employees, supervisors, and travel approving officials in determining reimbursement for local travel expenses incurred.

Although much is available on TDY policy and reimbursement, very limited Federal guidance is available concerning reimbursement of local travel expenses. Generally, if the expense appears reasonable and was necessary to conduct business, the employee should be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses. Reimbursement for local travel expenses incurred is therefore at the discretion of the agency and the employee's supervisor or travel approving official.

There is one situation where we are precluded from providing local travel reimbursement to employees. **A Federal Agency, per Comptroller General ruling, can not reimburse (or give the appearance that they are reimbursing) employees for local travel costs incurred from the employees residence to their official duty station.** This ruling should not be confused with Federal Government sponsored "Mass Transit Incentive" programs. Under such programs Federal organizations may provide employees with limited (prescribed) monetary incentives which are used to offset the cost of certain types of mass transportation used by the employee in home to work commuting. The authority under these special incentive programs is unique and should not be interpreted as a basis for reimbursing employees for home to work travel costs.

To uphold the preceding Comptroller General ruling, it has been a common practice to deduct the mileage or equivalent mileage cost from the employee's residence to their official duty station from all local travel vouchers. This practice, often inconsistently applied, has proven to be inequitable and unfair to many employees seeking reimbursement for out of pocket, local travel expenses. Therefore, **the practice of deducting employee residence to duty station mileage or equivalent mileage costs from all local travel vouchers should be discontinued**. References to this practice will be deleted from all Financial Management Division (FMD) published guidance. The following policy will be used when considering or approving local travel expenses incurred by employees for official travel in and around the duty station:

D. Approving Local Travel Expenses.

Supervisors and other travel approving officials will ensure that employees are promptly reimbursed for reasonable, out-of-pocket expenses incurred for official local travel in or around the duty station. **Approving reimbursement for local travel expenses incurred must be made on a case-by-case basis.** In making this determination, approving officials should take care not to reimburse or give the appearance that they are reimbursing employees for routine residence to official duty station commuting costs. It is the responsibility of the employee seeking reimbursement to clearly illustrate and justify that local travel costs incurred were out of pocket and not part of their normal commuting expense.

E. Use of Convenience Checks

Local travel expenses may be paid by convenience check after approval.

Procedures:

The traveler prepares the SF-1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business, for local travel expenses and submits the form for approval. (See Enclosure 1 for preparation instructions.) This form must contain the travel date(s); itemization of the expenses, and total amounts claimed.

After approval of a completed SF-1164, the claimant will present the form to the convenience check writer for payment.

After payment is made to the claimant, the original of the form will be retained by the convenience check writer as supporting documentation for the disbursement. DO NOT forward a copy of the SF-1164 to the National Finance Center (NFC.)

F. Using the NFC Unified Travel System (Type L, Local Travel Authorization)

In addition to the use of convenience checks, the NFC Unified Travel System allows for the use of a Type L, Local travel authorization (Form AD-202, Travel Authorization/Advance), as a method for an employee or group of employees to obtain reimbursement for local travel expenses. The use of Type L authorizations and subsequent vouchers (Form AD-616, Travel Voucher) enables employees to obtain expeditious reimbursement for local travel expenses incurred.

Procedures:

See Enclosure 2 for instructions on preparing Type L, Local travel authorizations.

Follow NFC Manual Title II, Chapter 2, Section 1, Travel System and Title VI, Chapter 6, Section 1, Travel Online Data Entry, for additional instructions on processing Type L authorizations and reimbursement vouchers.

Type L authorizations may be issued to authorize an employee or group of employees (up to 50) for an entire fiscal year.

II - Emergency Advance of Funds for Salary

Emergency advances for salary, using convenience checks, are permitted only in the following two situations:

- New hires. (Limited to the first two pay periods only.)
- Other emergency one-time situations as determined by the ARS Area Administrative Officer (AAO) or appropriate CSREES, ERS, and NASS approving official or fundholder.

Procedures to make the advance:

Emergency salary advances to employees are not to exceed the net pay that would have been received through the regular payroll process for the equivalent hours in pay status, excluding overtime and premium pay.

All emergency salary advance requests must be justified in writing by the employee. For ARS, Area and Location requests must be submitted to the Area Administrative Officer. Headquarters employee requests should be submitted to the Director, Financial Management Division (FMD). CSREES, ERS, and NASS employees should submit their requests to their immediate supervisor. The request for authorization must include the employee's name, social security number, job title, permanent duty station, the amount requested, and a brief description of the emergency situation.

An emergency salary advance is accomplished through completion of a Form SF-1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business. (See Enclosure 3 for preparation instructions.) Emergency salary advances must be made in whole dollar increments and may only be processed after receiving written authorization (E-mail, memo, etc.) from the ARS AAO, Director, FMD, for ARS and AFM Headquarters, or the appropriate CSREES, ERS, and NASS approving official or fund holder.

After approval of a SF-1164 by the fundholder, the claimant will present the SF-1164 to the convenience check writer for payment. When payment is made to the claimant, the original form becomes supporting documentation for the check disbursement along with the authorization received from the approving official.

Procedures to collect emergency salary advances:

The fundholder must ensure that the collection of the emergency salary payment is made through proper coding of the claimant's automated AD-321, Time and Attendance (T&A) report. (See Enclosure 4 for completion instructions.) The fundholder should establish a file for each emergency salary payment to include a copy of the SF-1164 received from the convenience check writer, as well as a copy of the

claimant's T&A on which the collection transaction was recorded.

The employee responsible for funds control must monitor the NFC Payroll Detail Listing (PDL) accounting report for the applicable pay period, to determine if the collection for the emergency salary payment was correctly made, and take follow up action with NFC when collections are not made or when errors are detected.

III - Emergency Advance of Funds for Travel

The Department has precluded use of the convenience check for travel advances. Therefore, previous guidance permitting use of convenience checks for emergency travel advances (REE Bulletin 98-305) is rescinded.

Emergency travel advances should be satisfied through one of two primary methods:

- Use of the Automated Teller Machine (ATM) feature of the NationsBank Visa travel charge card; or
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to the employees bank or financial institution through the Unified Travel System.

In situations where neither of the two preceding methods can be used, approval will be provided on a case-by-case basis to reopen or retain low dollar value seasonal imprest funds for the sole purpose of affecting emergency travel advance payments. These seasonal imprest funds must be reduced to zero dollars on hand when the seasonal need subsides. See ARS Financial Management Manual (FMM), Chapter 3100 - Establishment of Imprest Fund.

A justification statement to re-establish or keep an imprest fund for the purpose of emergency travel advances must be submitted from the Area Administrative Officer to FMD for approval. The FMD will coordinate necessary actions with the NFC, Accounting Reporting Branch, Reporting Section Number 4. Each justification statement must: 1) certify that the imprest fund is the only means available to accomplish emergency travel advances; 2) include the estimated number of emergency travel advances needed to satisfy the seasonal need; 3) stipulate the approximate duration of the season; and, 4) identify the amount of the imprest fund balance required. FMD will use this information to justify each remaining imprest fund to the Department.

Procedures for obtaining an advance of funds from Imprest Fund

Emergency travel advances can be made to employees for short notice travel assignments not to exceed an amount sufficient to cover anticipated per diem and other cash expense items from an imprest fund.

The AD-202, Travel Authorization/Advance, must be prepared to authorize the traveler to incur travel expenses. Upon approval of the AD-202, the traveler will present the form and justification statement to the Imprest Fund cashier. The cashier will require the employee to sign and date Section E of the AD-202 at the time the cash is given. A copy of the AD-202 and approved justification should be placed in the employee's travel records. The

AD-202 is not processed as a subvoucher for reimbursement through the normal OF-1129, Cashier Reimbursement Voucher and/or Accountability Report, replenishment procedure. Instead, the cashier will immediately submit the AD-202 to NFC to obtain reimbursement for the advance. An unreplenished emergency travel advance should be identified as Emergency Travel advance in the Status of Funds section of the OF-1129 reimbursement voucher, if a replenishment of the fund is necessary before the travel advance check is received by the cashier.

The cashier must maintain a file on the AD-202 indicating a travel advance payment; the Statement of Reimbursement - Imprest Fund cashier's printouts received from NFC; and ARS-334, log of Cash Travel Advances from Imprest Funds. (See Exhibit 34-7A of the ARS FMM for this form.)

Note: This Bulletin has been coordinated with the Human Resources Division (HRD) and the Procurement and Property Division (PPD). HRD and PPD will incorporate the procedures contained herein in their future applicable Policy and Procedures.

/S/

S. M. HELMRICH

Director

Financial Management Division

Completion Instructions for Form SF-1164,
Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business

- Agency Name - Enter USDA, REE, and agency name at the top of the form.
- Claimant - Enter the claiming employee's name, social security number, office mailing address, and office phone number.
- Date - Cite the specific date(s) that expenses occurred for which reimbursement is being claimed.
- Code - Enter Code "A" for local travel expense.
- Explain Expenditure in Specific Detail - Identify the "from" and "to" points for local travel claims.
- Mileage Rate - Enter the current authorized mileage rate for use of personally owned vehicle (POV).
- No. of Miles - Enter the number of miles for each segment of local travel claimed.
- Amount Claimed Mileage - Enter the amount claimed for each segment of local travel by multiplying the mileage rate times the number of miles in that segment.
- Amount Claimed Fare or Toll - Enter the amount of each taxi, bus, or subway fare claimed, as well as any toll road fees.
- Add. Persons - If applicable, enter the number of additional persons covered in any fare or toll claim.
- Amount Claimed Tips and Misc. - Enter the amounts of any tips or incidental miscellaneous expenses claimed.
- Totals - Provide column totals for: No. of Miles; amount claimed for mileage; amount claimed for fares or tolls; and amount claimed for tips and miscellaneous expenses.

- Amount Claimed - Enter the grand total of the amount claimed for mileage; fares or tolls; and, tips and miscellaneous expenses.
- Accounting Classification - Cite the accounting code(s) and, if applicable, subaccount(s) chargeable.
- Claimant's Signature - The employee applying for the claim signs here.
- Approving Official Signature - The fundholder, or other authorized approving official signs here.
- Cash Payment Receipt - After reimbursing the claimant, obtain his/her signature and require the he/she record the date and amount of payment to verify that the convenience check transaction has been completed.

Instructions for Form AD-202,
Travel Authorization for Type L, Local Travel

1. ACTION CODE (enter one of the following):

E = Enter to establish a new travel authorization.

A = Amends an authorization that was previously established.

2. AUTHORIZATION DATE: Enter the preparation date of the travel authorization.

SECTION A- IDENTIFICATION

3. TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION NO.: Enter the appropriate authorization number (13-position number) assigned to the authorization. The second position of the authorization must be "L" for local travel. If authorizing a single individual, the third position of the authorization number will be an "S". If authorizing a group of individuals, the third position of the authorization number will be an "M".

4. SOCIAL SECURITY NO.: Enter the traveler's social security number. If the authorization covers multiple travelers, leave this block blank and complete Form AD-202M (Attachment for Multiple Travelers). The AD-202M has a sufficient number of blocks to indicate the appropriate social security number of 50 individuals within an office.

5. NAME: Enter the traveler's name. If the authorization covers multiple travelers, leave this block blank and complete the AD-202M.

The AD-202M is used along with the AD-202 to accommodate situations of group travel of up to 50 travelers. Each AD-202M can accommodate 25 travelers, therefore, if 26-50 travelers are being authorized, use two AD-202M's.

6. AGENCY CODE: Enter the 2-digit agency code; "03" for ARS, "22" for CSREES, "18" for ERS, and "20" for NASS.
7. AGENCY ORIGINATING OFFICE NUMBER (OON): Enter the applicable 10-digit originating office number, e.g., AG03XXXXXX.
8. TRAVELER ORIGINATING OFFICE NUMBER (OON): Leave blank.
9. ESTIMATED DATES OF TRAVEL: Enter the beginning and ending dates of the fiscal year.

10. TRAVEL TYPE: Enter the type travel code “DM” for domestic travel.
11. GOVERNMENT CREDIT CARD HOLDER Leave blank if this is a multiple authorization. If authorizing one individual, enter “Y” for yes if the traveler has a Government contractor-issued travel charge card or is eligible for a Government contractor-issued travel charge card. Enter “N” for no if the traveler is not eligible for a card.
12. TRAINING DOCUMENT NO.: Leave blank. However, if local travel is performed for the purpose of travel code 3 the training document number should be entered on the AD-616, Travel Voucher and the accounting redistributed to the correct purpose of travel code, accounting code, and percentage.
13. OFFICIAL DUTY STATION CITY AND STATE: For multiple Type L authorizations, leave this block blank. If authorizing one individual, enter the city or town and 2-position state abbreviation code in which the traveler is now stationed.
14. RESIDENT CITY AND STATE: For multiple Type L authorizations, leave this block blank. If authorizing one individual and this is the same as the official duty station, leave this block blank, otherwise, enter the city and 2-position state abbreviation code of the travel's residence.

SECTION B- EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Only one block may be checked in this section. All employees on a multiple authorization must be of the same employment status.

15. PAYROLLED BY NFC: If all travelers are Federal employees of an agency payrolled by NFC, check this block and move to Section C. All employees listed as payrolled by NFC must have been payrolled by NFC for at least 2 pay periods.
16. NOT PAYROLLED BY NFC: Leave blank.
17. NEW HIRE: If all travelers are newly-hired Federal employees whose effective date of employment has been within the last 2 pay periods, check this block and move to Section C. All employees listed on the authorization must meet the same criteria.
18. SPECIAL APPOINTEE: If all travelers are special appointees, check this block and move to Section C. All employees listed on the authorization must meet the same criteria.
19. NONGOVERNMENT: Leave blank.

SECTION C- ITINERARY AND ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES

20. FROM: Leave blank.
21. TO: Leave blank.
22. PURPOSE OF TRAVEL: Enter a brief statement describing the specific reason for the travel. DO NOT use the purpose of travel code definition.
23. AUTHORIZED EXPENDITURES: The only expenditures that can be authorized for Type L authorizations are POV, Other, GSA Auto, and Car Rental. If a POV has been authorized, provide the POV rate.
24. TOTAL EST. EXPENDITURES AUTHORIZED: Enter the cumulative amount of Block 23.

SECTION D - ACCOUNTING CLASSIFICATION

25. DISTRIBUTE TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES FROM SECTION C TO THE APPLICABLE PURPOSE OF TRAVEL CODE AND ACCOUNTING CLASSIFICATION

PURPOSE OF TRAVEL CODES: Enter the correct purpose travel code for each accounting code that will be entered. Only the following purpose codes should be used on a Type L.

- 1 - Site visit
- 2 - Information meeting
- 4 - Speech or presentation
- 5 - Conference attendance
- 10 - Other travel

ACCOUNTING CLASSIFICATION: Enter the appropriate accounting code to which the travel will be charged. If there is more than one accounting code, then it should be annotated on the next line with the appropriate purpose of travel code and percentage.

SECTION E - TRAVEL ADVANCE

Leave this section blank.

SECTION F - AGENCY APPROVAL

- 35. **APPROVING OFFICER'S NAME AND TITLE:** Enter the name of the appropriate official and position title.
- 36. **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER:** Enter the approving officer's social security number. Note: The social security number must be for the approving official that is signing the authorization.
- 37. **DATE APPROVED:** The approving officer must provide the date of approval, using the mm/dd/yy format.
- 38. **PHONE (AREA CODE & NO.):** Enter the area code and telephone number of the approving officer.
- 39. **APPROVING OFFICER'S SIGNATURE:** The approving officer must sign and the individual signing must be the same individual whose name and social security number appears in Blocks 35 and 36.
- 40. **CONTACT PERSON'S NAME:** Enter the name of the person to contact for information regarding the travel authorization if other than the approving official.
- 41. **PHONE (AREA CODE & NO.):** Enter the area code and telephone number of the contact person listed in Block 40.
- 42. **REMARKS:** Enter any additional information that may be pertinent.

SPECIAL NOTE: In instances where the employee's supervisor, normally considered the approving officer, is geographically separated from the employee, an alternate (local) approving officer may be designated. For example, ARS Area Directors will use the Area Administrative Officer (AAO) or Area Budget and Fiscal Officer (ABFO) as the approving officer for local travel reimbursement purposes. Use of the AAO/ABFO as approving officer does not apply to temporary duty travel situations.

Completion Instructions for Form SF-1164,
Process Emergency Salary Payments

- Agency Name - Enter USDA, REE, and Agency Name at the top of the form.
- Claimant - Enter the name, social security number, office mailing address, and office phone number of the employee applying for the emergency salary payment.
- Date - Cite the date of the emergency salary payment request.
- Code - Enter Code "C" for "Other Expenses".
- Explain Expenditure in Specific Detail - Indicate the basis by which the amount of the emergency salary payment has been determined and include a brief justification supporting the payment.
- Amount Claimed
Tips and Misc. - Enter the amount of the emergency salary payment in whole dollars.
- Totals - Enter the amount of the emergency salary payment in whole dollars.
- Amount Claimed - Enter the amount of the emergency salary payment in whole dollars.
- Accounting Classification - Cite the accounting code(s) and, if applicable, subaccount(s) chargeable.
- Claimant's Signature - The employee applying for the emergency salary payment signs here.
- Approving Official Signature - The fundholder, or other authorized approving official signs here.
- Cash Payment

Receipt

- After providing payment to the payee, obtain his/her signature and require the he/she record the date and amount of payment, to verify that the convenience check transaction has been completed.

Completion Instructions for Form AD-321, Time & Attendance Report
Collection of Emergency Salary Payment Through Payroll Deduction

These instructions pertain to the preparation of the automated Time and Attendance (T&A) report in order to accomplish a payroll deduction for collection of an emergency salary payment. This offset should always be recorded on the T&A for the pay period for which the convenience check payment was made, or the pay period immediately following, and must be for the full amount of the convenience check payment.

TRANSACTION CODE (TC) Use TC 89 to reduce the net pay amount of the salary payment by the amount of the emergency convenience check payment. TC 89 may be recorded in Lines 3 through 13, and should appear as the last recorded entry in the TC column.

WEEK1/WEEK2 The amount of the deductions is entered in the WEEK1 and WEEK2 hours column.

An emergency salary payment is made in whole dollars. Therefore, the fraction amount will always be zero. The maximum amount that can be entered into a field is \$99.00 (i.e., recorded as 990.0 on the T&A).

When the amount to be collected is in excess of \$99.00, more than one field is used. Use the WEEK1 column for the first entry and the WEEK2 column for the second entry. For example: If a deduction of \$150 is to be recorded, enter 990 in the WEEK1 field and 0 in the fractions portion of the WEEK1 field. Enter 510 in the WEEK2 field and 0 in the fractions portion of the WEEK2 field.

If additional entries are required, use the next line of the T&A.

TOTAL TIME Do not include the dollar values entered opposite the TC 89 entries in the WEEK1 and WEEK2 columns to arrive at the TOTAL TIME in pay status.

ACCOUNTING CODE

For entries made against TC 89, enter the same accounting code used on the SF-1164 that initially authorized the emergency convenience check payment. If stored accounting is used, no accounting entries are required.

Upon completion of the preceding instructions, the T&A clerk will:

1. Transmit the automated T&A.
2. Provide a copy of the T&A to the convenience check writer who made the emergency advance.